

In Love & Memory of



Tommy Jacquette-Halifu

6183 December 13 - 6249 November 16

1943 December 13 - 2009 November 16

MAZIKO  
Transition Service



Given Life Forever and Ever



**Nguzo Saba**  
The Seven Principles



**Umoja**  
Unity



**Kujichagulia**  
Self-Determination



**Vjima**  
Collective Work and  
Responsibility



**Vjamaa**  
Cooperative Economics



**Nia**  
Purpose



**Kuumba**  
Creativity



**Imani**  
Faith

Dr. Maulana Karenga  
Creator of Kwanzaa



Halifu at the 30th Annual Watts  
Summer Festival



Halifu lighting a candle at the  
Community Umoja (Unity) Night  
Celebration



Tommy Jacquette Halifu, Jamil  
Abdullah Al-Amin (H. Rap  
Brown), Maulana Karenga and  
Amiri Jomo Shambulia at the  
first Uhuru Day Rally (1967) to  
commemorate the Watts Revolt at  
the Us headquarters.

Founders of Us at Kuanzisha  
(Founders' Day) at the  
African American Cultural  
Center (Us). l to r: Sigidi,  
Ngao, Maulana, Halifu and  
Hekima






---

**IBADA**  
Order of Service

---

6249 November 28 ♦ 2009 November 28

Ngoma na Taamuli - Music and Meditation

Tambiko  
Libation for the Ancestors

Seba Dr. Maulana Karenga  
Officiant, Temple of Kawaïda

Kha-em-hotep  
Rise up In Radiance and Peace

Seba Dr. Maulana Karenga

Masomo - Readings

The Sacred Husia  
The Sacred Odu Ifa  
Letters to the Living  
Letters to the Living  
The Sacred Husia

Seba Tiamoyo Karenga  
Seba Tulivu Jadi  
LatreCIA Denise Jacquette McFall  
Damian Tillman Jacquette  
Seba Chimbuko Tembo

Mawazo - Reflections

Family and Community

Tanzia - Obituary

Derek L. Jacquette  
Julienne Ife Jacobs Jacquette  
Raymond Jacquette  
Shani Jacquette Freeman  
Juba Halifu Jacquette Muhammad

Taabini - Eulogy

Seba Dr. Maulana Karenga

Ahadi ya Kwisha  
Closing Commitment

The Community

Ngoma -Music



---

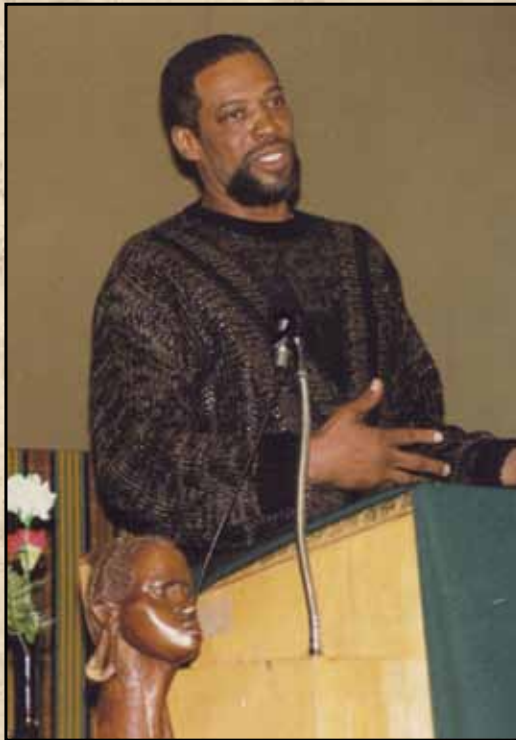
## Tanzia - Obituary

---

Tommy Jacquette-Halifu, executive director of the Watts Summer Festival for over 40 years and highly-respected social activist, community organizer and veteran of the Watts Revolt, was born in Los Angeles, 1943 December 13, to Raymond Jacquette and Addie Henson. The oldest of six children, he grew up in Watts, attended 116<sup>th</sup> Street Elementary School, Gompers Junior High School and Riis Senior High School. He often used Riis and its reputation as a last chance opportunity for educating “difficult” youth as a teaching moment to explain how he moved from there, street-wise and on a fast track to tragedy, to where he eventually found himself—in the middle of the Movement for the liberation and empowerment of his people after the Watts Revolt.

Tommy continued his education later, taking classes at Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Pepperdine University and California State University, Pomona. He also attended various seminars on critical social issues to stay abreast with current thinking and findings in these areas.

The turning point in Tommy’s life was, without



question, the Watts Revolt, 1965 August 11-17, which was sparked, as in other parts of the country, by police brutality. Marquette Frye, the central figure in the Revolt, (along with his mother, Rita Frye, and brother Ronald Frye), was a close friend of Tommy’s and Tommy readily joined in community resistance to the mistreatment and arrest of them, which was perceived as another example of police abuse and brutality.

The Revolt became for Tommy and others, a context for consciousness-raising, mobilizing, organizing, meeting other activists and building solidarity, and addressing other critical issues of racism, economic exploitation and social injustice in general. Tommy became alive to a whole ‘nother world of interests, activities and possibilities as he embraced it eagerly.

Given this appreciation for the expansive meaning of the Revolt, he rejected calling it a “riot” and insisted on it being called a “rebellion” and “revolt”. “A riot is a drunken brawl at USC because they lost a football game”, he said. “But the Revolt had a legitimate purpose. It was a response to police brutality and

---

social exploitation of a community and of a people”.

Tommy emerged in the midst of the aftermath of the Revolt as a youth organizer and leader. With his best friend, Karl Key-Hekima, his brother Thomas Henson, Ken Msemaji and

others, he formed the organization SLANT (Self-Determination and Leadership for All Nationalities Today). It was a name that represented the grand thinking and dreaming attached to youth in general and Tommy in particular. He thought large and constantly searched for others whose imagination matched his own.

SLANT, under Tommy's leadership and working within the context of TALO (Temporary Alliance of Local Organizations), initiated the founding of the Community Alert Patrol (CAP). CAP was created to monitor police and involved patrolling the streets with cameras and recorders and documenting police behavior, advising people of their rights and maintaining a battery of volunteer lawyers to assist. This was put in place a few months after the Revolt and became the model for other organizations in the Bay Area and elsewhere who later did likewise.

Tommy was also a founding member of the organization Us and cited his study of Kawaïda philosophy,



Clockwise: Karl Key-Hekima, Thomas Henson, Ngao Damu, Ken Msemaji, Tommy Halifu and Maulana Karenga at an early meeting of Us/SLANT

his work in and for Us and his mentoring by Dr. Maulana Karenga, as another turning point in his life. He counted as a fundamental part of his self-formation his experience and learning in the organizational context of Us. He studied

organizing at the Social Action Training Center with Walter Bremond (Founder of the Brotherhood Crusade), Dr. John Davis and Dr. Karenga; and studied Swahili at Fremont Adult School; as well as, Kawaïda Studies in leadership, cultural revolution and social change at the African American Cultural Center (Us) and the Kawaïda Institute of Pan-African Studies (Us) with Dr. Karenga.

In Kawaïda philosophy he found a critical and reaffirming way to understand and approach the world. In a recent interview, he said “It is my belief in Kawaïda that has given me the strength and tools to keep going...(and)...the courage to continue the struggle”. It is in the context of Kawaïda's stress on grounding in African culture that Tommy chose his African name, Halifu, which in Swahili means rebellious, resistant, oppositional and defiant. And by extension, it meant for him, “steadfast resister-to-injustice” and “audacious breaker-of-unrighteous-rules”.

---



Halifu receiving a Malcolm X award for leadership.

Halifu was a tireless activist, attending endless meetings, giving testimony and hard talk at various community meetings, commissions, hearings and other official gatherings, constantly mobilizing around critical issues and organizing with others projects and structures to struggle and serve the interests of the people. In addition to *SLANT*, *Us*, *TALO* and *CAP*, Halifu was active in the building and/or work of the Brotherhood Crusade, the Black Congress, the Operational Unity Committee, the County Human Relations Commission, Westminster Neighborhood Association, Ujima Village, Watts Health Foundation, Mafundi Institute, the Watts Gang Task Force, the U.S. Census, Mothers in Action, the Watts/Willowbrook Christmas Parade, as well as other institutions, organizations and projects.

But as everyone who knows Halifu knows, the Watts Summer Festival was his signature work and way of serving the community. It represented for him more than a simple event or happening. It was about what he believed concerning culture and community; about preserving memory and leaving a legacy. And

it was about uniting all of us in good, joyful and meaningful ways. Halifu lived and breathed the Festival. In fact, his family, talking about how much he cared for the Festival, reported that they had a regularly repeated joke that “Tommy loved his children but the Festival was his baby”.

Most often, the Festival worked on a meager, sometimes non-existent budget, but Halifu was steadfast in preserving and promoting it. He noted that the Festival “always operated with a rice, beans and cornbread budget, but it continues because the people embrace and support it”. His greatest triumph was the Wattstax Concert, the Watts Summer Festival Presentation in 1972, at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum which drew over 100,000 people and included a long list of major performers and political leaders. It was designed as a fundraiser for the Festival, but did not quite work out that way.

What Halifu liked most about the Festival and his four decades of work and struggle in and for the Watts and larger Black community was how it linked him to the people. He was a true servant of the people, especially the masses, everyday people. Here Malcolm X was his



Halifu, executive director and Pam Garrett, chair of the board of the Watts Summer Festival.

---

model in his love for, belief in and commitment to the masses. He loved being with them; sharing and struggling with them. Indeed, he gave his life to them. For him, the people's support of him and the Festival were the measure and central meaning of his work. Thus, he said, "I constantly say that without the people's support, without the people's participation, all is for naught. And this (along with Kawaïda grounding) is my other source of strength and encouragement". Halifu enjoyed life and his work, loved his family and friends, valued good conversations and laughed loud, long and deep in the midst of them. He also enjoyed lecturing, reading and drawing up plans for a host of things.

Halifu has left us a significant legacy of committed social activism and institution-building, consistent service to our people and constant struggle in the interest of social justice. And we will best honor him by continuing and expanding the work and struggle to which he gave his life.

Tommy Jacquette-Halifu made his transition following a hard-fought battle with cancer, passing in peace and rising in radiance at home on November 16. He is preceded in passing by his brothers

Thomas Henson and Robert Bennett. He is survived by his mother, Addie Henson-Young, Los Angeles; his wife, Carmen Eatmon, Los Angeles; four sons: Derek and Raymond Jacquette, Los Angeles, Damian and Juba Jacquette, Phoenix; three daughters: Latrecia Denise Jacquette McFall, Los Angeles, Julienne Ife Jacquette Jacobs, St. Louis, and Shani Jacquette

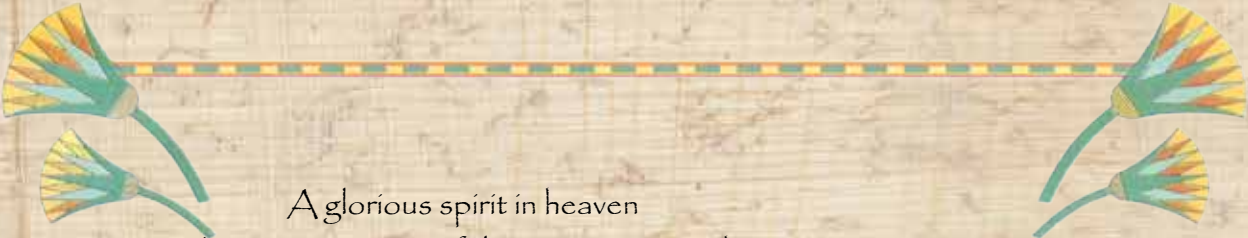
Freeman, Los Angeles; a brother, Bob Henson, Carmel; two sisters: Brenda Lake and Diane Young, Los Angeles; 25 grandchildren; four great-grand children; two god-children, Taylor and Imani; a host of nieces and nephews and all the children for which he

served as surrogate father throughout his life in the Watts and larger Los Angeles community. He is also survived by his best friend, Karl Key-Hekima, whom he also considered another brother.



Operational Unity at African Liberation Day





A glorious spirit in heaven  
A continuing powerful presence on earth  
Justification in the Divine domain.  
Resurrection after death.  
These are the gifts of the righteous ones.  
And righteous are those who receive them.  
They will be counted among the ancestors.  
Their name shall endure as a monument.  
And what they've done on earth  
Shall never perish or pass away.

### The Sacred Husia



“The Festival came out of the ashes of the ‘65 Revolt and it symbolizes a time when we as a people were as one, when we stood together as a people and began to address all those issues that faced us as a people. We stood as a people in 1965. That was an era and a time that had an effect not only here in Watts, but across the U.S., even from what I understand, other parts of the world. And so for that, I stand and for the future and for those that will follow us, those young people that are coming up today and will have to understand the struggle and the sacrifice that those of us made for them and even for us. . .”

Tommy Jacquette-Halifu

The family, the Watts Summer Festival and the organization Us gratefully acknowledge the many words of comfort and numerous acts of kindness expressed by friends and the community-at-large.

Asante, asante nyingi na baada ya asante mchanga wa pwani ni haba.  
Thanks, many thanks and compared to the many times we say thanks,  
the grains of sand on the seashore are few.

Maziko Service held at: Watts Labor Community Action Center  
10950 South Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90059



African American Cultural Center (Us)  
3018 West 48<sup>th</sup> Street, Los Angeles, CA 90043  
(323) 299-6124, [www.Us-Organization.org](http://www.Us-Organization.org)